Arm The Spirit
Box 475 253
College Street
Toronto Ont.
M5T 1R5
Canada

STATEMENT FROM ANTI-IMPERIALIST WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS

AT MARIANNA PRISON, USA

Historically, we have joined together as women on International Women's Day to celebrate our heritage, acknowledge our history, underline our continued subjugation, press our demands and resist the inequalities that confront us. We did it empowered by the knowledge that in every nation in the world, other women were also raising their voices and fists. This year, March 8, occurs in the shadow of a barbarous episode of United States agression; the extent of the destruction still unknown, maybe never to be fully revealed. We gather filled with the images of women and children wounded, maimed, dead: the "collateral damage" of the allies "surgically precise" bombardments.

While others cheer the victory, we as women must redouble our efforts to mobilize and organize against the actions of the United States, in support of the self-determination of nations and peoples. As women we raise our voices in solidarity with the people of the Middle East and in particular the Palestinians, the abandoned, invisible, other targets of this war. The hostilities might have temporarily ceased, but the war is not over! We are at the beginning of a protracted U.S. military occupation of a large part of the Middle East. The troops are not coming home; they will remain there to impose the will of the United States and its allies and to assure the longevity of feudal ruling dynasties that history has already by-passed. Any hopes for redressing regional grievances through mass democratic movements such as the Intifadah will now face an obdurate wall of U.S. marines. Despite the turgid rhetoric emanating from Washington, autocracy, women's oppression and backward economic relationships will be reinforced by the presence of the United States. This is the "new world order" commanded by Bush.

If polls are believable, a large portion of women in the United States did not support this war. The spectacle of battle-fatigued female soldiers is insufficient to win us over. Could it be that our responsibilities as providers, nurturers, educators, and parents fill our consciousness with a different agenda? We, who must feed the children, care for the sick and dying, find shelter when none is available, clean the wounds left by the increasingly violent, racist, and homophobic attacks, experience the day-to-day reality of the "new world order". The domestice face of war and aggression is increased poverty and degradation. When the bill is finally presented for this "new world order", women and children will be the first to pay.

The cost is not limited to economics. Repression, racism, sexism, and homophobia are the other immeasurable debts accumulating inside the United States. Racial sterotypes are multiplying, reproducing some of the worst caricatures of past years. Arabs have been equated to demons and people have lost compassion for fellow human beings. A prisoner here said, "Let's just turn the place into a parking lot;" it was received with overwhelming applause. Dissent is being silenced; there is a concerted effort to isolate those who disagree. At our prison we were told no discussion of the war would be tolerated while the staff displayed increasingly large flags, buttons and yellow ribbons. Black History Month was used to mobilize support for the war. The majority of the invited speakers

represented the most reactionary elements in the African-American community. All these efforts were only partially successful. Dissent continued and the opposition on the outside gave encouragement to those who resisted this manipulation.

As a movement we have had a preview of our capacities. Thousands came into the streets to express condemnation of U.S. military aggression. Yet the world-wide anti-war forces did not stop the war or the bombings and murder of more than 100,000 Iraqi people. The movement has not been successful in forcing the U.S. to uphold the Palestinian people's right to return to their land and end Israeli occupation. We have not won, but we have not definitively lost. The struggle continues.

The upsurge of the last several months may end and the numbers of people in motion may diminish but the contradictions at home, in this prisonhouse of nations and nationalities will continue. 25 years ago, the Black Liberation struggle brought the war home from Vietnam and challenged the society to its white supremacist core; that challenge is more urgent now. In opposing war and aggression abroad, let us not forget the war at home.

In the years since we have been in prison the world has changed drastically. East and West have become North and South. But one thing has not changed - U.S.-led imperialism. We are imprisoned because as women we acted in opposition to U.S. imperialism and in support of self-determination of the oppressed nations and peoples. Current events demand continued anti-imperialist resistance.

Now is the time for us as women& as lesbians to come to the forefront and fight for our agenda. As we gather this year and build our walls of resistance let's promise ourselves that when we meet next year we will celebrate the victory of the FMLN in El Salvador, full U.S. withdrawal from the Saudi Arabian peninsula, and an intensified mobilization at home to win full human rights and justice.

VENCEREMOS!

Silvia Baraldini
Marilyn Buck
Susan Rosenberg
Laura Whitehorn - Lexington FCI